

**Please contact your US Senators and Representatives on the "The Training for Realtime Writers Act of 2007,  
(S.675,February 2007)**

### **Closed Captioning: Sen. Harkin's Proposal Expands Careers**

Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) introduced recently "The Training for Realtime Writers Act of 2007," (S. 675, February 2007), a bill to authorize \$100 million in grants that would expand training and job placement for closed captioners and court reporters. The bill is intended to help lessen the shortage of people available to insert closed captioning in television and other video programming. Beginning in January 2006, the government has required 100% of all new television programming to have closed captioning and the demand for captioners is very high. The measure is a personal priority for the Senator whose brother was deaf.

"I know personally that access to culture, news and other media was important to [my brother] and to others in achieving a better quality of life," Harkin said in his floor statement introducing the bill. "More than 30 million Americans are considered deaf or hard of hearing, and many require captioning services to participate in mainstream activities." Senator Harkin noted that that nearly all who complete their training as closed-captioners find jobs quickly because so few individuals are entering the field.

The Senate passed a similar bill in 2005, but it did not see action in the House. This year, Rep. Ron Kind, (D-WI) has introduced companion legislation (HR 1687), which has yet to undergo markup by the House Education and Labor Committee.

**Action Step: Write to your Congressperson and Senator today and ask them to support this valuable measure. Cite the bill number and how important closed captioning is in making television technology accessible for millions of persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, elderly or who rely on the text to understand television content.**

Source: AAPD